

## SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

For, as you know, when we are locked into that, our enemies cannot offend us. Then, every exercise that you do will be directed and ordained according to God. Also, I pray you to ripen your heart with a holy and true prudence, and to let your life be an example in the eyes of the laity, by never conforming yourself with the customs of the world. And let that generosity towards the poor and voluntary poverty, which you have always had, be renewed and refreshed in you, with true and perfect humility ; and do not let it ever grow lax, because of any state or exaltation that God gives you ; but plunge yourself down more deeply into the valley of that humility, finding delight in taking the food of souls at the table of the Cross, embracing humble, faithful and continual prayer as a mother, with holy watchfulness, celebrating Mass every day, unless by chance it should be necessary to abstain from it. Shun unnecessary and light speech, but be and show yourself mature in what you say, and in all you do. Cast away all tenderness for yourself and all servile fear ; for the sweet Church has no need of such folk, but of cruel persons, cruel to themselves and pitiful to her. These are the things which I pray you to strive to observe. Also, I pray you to get into your hands the Book and all my writings which you can find, you and Fra Bartolommeo and Fra Tommaso and the Master ; and do with them what you see to be most to the honour of God, together with Messer Tommaso;<sup>1</sup> in them I found some recreation. I pray you further, as far as you will be able, to be the pastor and ruler of this family, even as a father, to preserve them in love of charity and in perfect union; so that they may not be left scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. And I think to do more for them, and for you, after my death than in life. I will pray the eternal Truth to pour out over you all the fulness of grace and gifts that He has given to my soul, in order that you may be shining lights set on a candlestick. And I pray you to pray to the eternal Bridegroom that He may make me fulfil manfully the obedience that He has laid upon me, and may forgive me the multitude of my iniquities. Also, I pray you to pardon me all <sup>1</sup> Tommaso Petra, then one of the papal secretaries. 338